



Sounding

Newsletter of the South Shore Neptunes

ANNOUNCEMENTS, ACTIVITIES, & REMINDERS

Calendar 2020

7/21 Zoom Program: Rob Robison slide show on winter, spring, and early summer diving to date. Pub Social time afterwards
 8/2/Duxbury Outing
CANCELED
 8/4 Zoom General Meeting 7:00PM
 8/8 Club Dive 8AM TBA
 8/11 Zoom Board Meeting 7:00PM
 8/16 Club Dive 8AM TBA
 8/18 Program
 9/1/ General Meeting 7PM
 TBA
 9/6 Club Dive, 8AM
 9/8 Board Meeting 7PM
 9/15 Program 7PM TBA
 9/2p BSC Treasure Hunt Stage Fort State Park TBA
 Gloucester, MA
 9/26 SSN Flea Market TBA
 10/3 Rain
 Date Flea Market



Newsletter: To help add interesting content to the newsletter during these unusual times, please send me (robisonr25@yahoo.com) any first hand accounts, stories, photos, or both about your exploits as a Neptune for potential publication. Photos or clippings enhance stories, so please include them if you can. Don't forget to provide contact info in case I have questions.

Club General and Board Meetings are now being held **on Zoom** until further notice. **See Club Facebook page** for pics and brief writeup.

Tuesday, July 21, Rob Robison will share a **slide show** of local diving from February through late June, early July **at 7 PM**

Sounding will be emailed to you until further notice.

All Club activities and programs listed on the Calendar or not that are in conflict with the stay-in-place quarantine **are also CANCELED until further notice.**

Don't forget to visit the **club store** at <https://southshoreneptunes.noslowturtles.com/store/> for the latest in club swag.

New site: www.divecommando.net. With the help of Neptune Jon Willis, I am creating a new site to publish slide and video montages of the best of the photos and video clips I/we make each month or particular period of time. Right now, you can find two slide shows, one made from the first

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three dives off Commando this season, and the other chronicling the shore dives made from February to June 28. Hope you will visit and enjoy www.divecommando.net>!

Rob

JUNE /JULY CLUB ACTIVITIES & DIVES

Back River Diving on the 4 of July 2020. *Story & photo by Doug Eaton*

Neptune **Jeff Finnell** wanted to dive the Back River after seeing the 5in. shells and bottles found by other divers. **Chuck Zarba**, Jeff, and I got to the river site at 9:30; we were in the water at 11:00. The air temp was 72°, the water temp was 65° at 20ft., and vis @3-5 Ft. We were in the water for 60 min. Jeff was happy, as he came out with his bounty of 40 mm shells and 30/6 shells. Chuck found a mug and bottles, and Doug found bottles and 30/6 shells. We had another Neptune waiting at the site, Todd Alger. We packed up our gear and cooked up some hot dogs to end the day at the river. It was a Happy Fourth!



Chuck Zarba & Jeff Finnell at Back River

Martin’s Ledge, Sunday, July 5, 2020. *Story by Doug Eaton*

Doug Eaton went diving with Neptunes **Tim Burke and Bob Bell**, and Tim’s brother, Chris. We went to Martin’s Ledge. The air temp was 72°, water temp 60° at 50 ft, and vis 20-25 ft. I did 2 dives sight seeing and chasing bugs. We all had a great day diving.

Near Harding Ledge, Sunday, July 12, 2020. *Story by Tommy Lo.*

Doug Eaton, Todd Alger, and I met at the Quincy Yacht Club at 8 a.m. No fog but small craft advisories starting at 11am. We loaded up and headed out. Dropped anchor and started our first dive. The current was running a bit and seas were around 2 ft. Again, I pulled out a few 3 lbs lobsters but full of eggs and had to be released. Visibility was 15 to 20 ft depending on where we were. I kept finding small areas where there would be a bunch of lobsters. Most of the keeps I found were in the area under the boat but had to swim ahead of the boat when I finished my dive cause the current would push me back. I did not want to come up behind the boat. I found the anchor and came up the anchor line. The current had picked up and was really moving. I passed my catch bag and weight belt up to Todd on the boat. As I took off my BCD and tank, I started getting choked around my neck. I discovered another hazard of diving, as the leach to my zipper somehow went around my neck and got tangled in the hoses. I had to grab a line and hang on while Todd untangled the mess. Finally freed, I scampered back onto the boat

Since the current had picked up and given the small craft advisories, I decided to stay on the boat while Todd and Doug did a second dive. On the way back we could see all the way down to Minot’s

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Happy Diving

From

JOHN & KATHY BLACKADAR

Light. Todd wound up doing a third dive, to retrieve a bag of lobsters that somehow came off the clip line.

When we got back to QYC, we had a few beers. Kevin (Captain of Sandra Jean) and his wife, Kristin, joined us. Another great day of diving.

Covid Diving Friday July 10. In the Lee of Shag

Rocks Island. *Story and photo by Tommy Lo*

After finding an updated boating Guideline for diving during stage 3 of the reopening (No more than 10 people on the boat and must follow safety distance guideline), **Doug, Todd and I** decided to give it a go with masks on.

We met at Quincy Yacht Club and headed out with masks on. After passing Hull Gut the fog thickened. I slowed the speed and cautiously kept going. Of course the fog got thicker. Not wanting to



drive around in the fog, we decided to anchor behind

Shag Rocks and wait for the fog to clear. Visibility was about 30 to 50 ft. in the fog.

After about 45 minutes the fog cleared and we continued on. The water was calm (like glass) our first dive visibility was anywhere from 10 to 20ft. I went as deep as 45 ft. Water temp? (My gauge is stuck at 106 degrees) I pulled out a few larger eggers that were close to the maximum size on the gauge. Sadly I had to let them go, but not before

I shot some video of them. I saw some nice Tautaug, but they were deep in a hole and I had no spear. My first dive , I bagged 7 keepers with 2 2.5 lbs. lobsters.

Second dive, we went to Betsy’s spot. By then the seas had kicked up a bit, and since I did not have my other tank, I sat this one out. Doug and Todd went in and had an awesome dive. I was rocking and rolling on the boat, while they were in the water. I could see Boston, Nahant, and Hull.

Sadly, by the time we headed back, the fog had rolled back in and cut the visibility down to about 30ft. and the marine forecast had issued small craft advisories. Anyhow, I had to follow the breadcrumb trails on the GPS to make our way back in. By the time we reached Hull Gut, the fog had lifted and we could see once more.

After the dive we had a few beers and then headed home.

Two dives at Plymouth Long Beach, Thursday, July 9 and Saturday July11. *Story by Rob; photos by Rob & June Smith*



REMEMBERING
Local Scuba Pioneer
JOHN BALDI

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Plymouth has finally opened Long Beach to non-residents charging a parking fee of \$20/car until 4:30 p.m. daily. Given the parking fee, dive buddies Brian Smith from Divers Market, and **Neptune Jon Willis** arranged to dive with me on Thursday and Saturday evenings, respectively. Our dives were similar in nature: We began at 5:25, and 6:30 p.m.; dove for 52 - 53 minutes in length, reached max depths of 15 - 16'; encountered water temps of 59° and 58°; and experienced vis of about 15-20' and 10', respectively.



On Brian's and my dive, Thursday, we encountered a spider crab mating with another out on the sand in about 8' of water before reaching the reef area. Other sightings of note were a small Sea Potato, Compound Sea Squirt and Orange Sheath Tunicates gorging on Rockweed; a striper schoolie (no photo), a

discarded fish carcass being hungrily cleaned by a small squadron of snails, and the loss of my older dive computer, a **Hollis DG03 3-button wrist dive computer**. I'm offering a **\$50 reward** to anyone who finds and returns it.

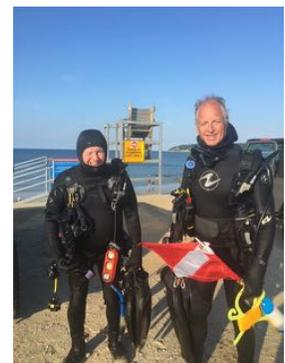


Compound Sea Squirt Engulfing Rock Weed

Saturday, Jon and I suited up and dropped in at high tide on Saturday evening. Our dive was similar, sans stripper sighting and dive computer loss. We found more lobsters than Brian and I had sighted, a number of which were probably keepers. A

few Club Tunicates were observed that had not been culled by the ubiquitous

Compound Sea Squirt and Orange Sheath Tunicate, both of which are invasive species changing the underwater flora and fauna balance. No flat fish of any sort were observed on either dive, although we did sight a couple of Cunner darting in and out of a small cave in the rocks. All in all, we both enjoyed refreshing evening dives. Brian, his wife, June, and I



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enjoyed some great shrimp plates at the local beach restaurant and bar called Sandy's (cash only), literally



Jon heading up toward the beach

10 yards from where we had parked. Jon and I finished our evening dive swigging down a couple of non-alcoholic (very good tasting, believe it or not) Moritz (Corona-like) beers, brewed in Barcelona, SPAIN, punctuating the end of a couple of good dives with great dive buddies.



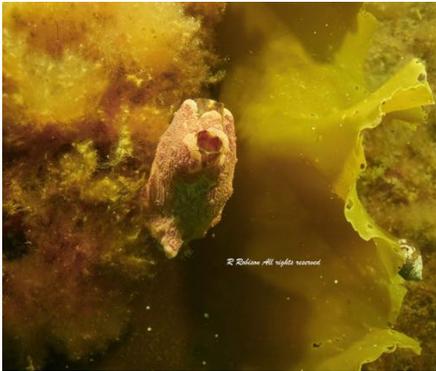
Plum Cove, Sunday, June 28, 2020. *Story and photos by Rob Robison*
 We were supposed to dive off Commando, my 15.5' Zodiac, but yesterday evening's weather report indicated thunder showers by 10:00AM this morning, so we canceled the boat dive



(Tiny) Knotted Thread Hydroid on Sugar Kelp frond

(Side note: the weather report was mistaken!) and attempted to go to the North Shore for a shore dive. Neptune Jon Willis didn't want to join us going north with good reason. He correctly anticipated there would be too many divers suiting up in the small Old Garden Park, and there was no parking. Dive buddy **Bonnie Zeller** and I decided to head for an alternative site, Gloucester's Plum Cove.

The cove was not a great alternate option, but we were able to get wet. The water was flat and the vis decent. Much of what was worth seeing had been dispersed from storms or predation or time of year or something else. It seemed naked or barren for the most part. Seaweed and kelp had been ripped from their rock moorings and carpeted the ocean floor in the shallower part of the cove. Still,



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Hairy Bryozoan

we managed to find some interesting items to photograph: There were ruffled ribbons of golden colored Sugar Kelp festooned with snails, hydroids, small hermit crabs, and bryozoans; plus oysters, tunicates, Moon snails, Eel grass forests, and more. Special thanks here to Andrew Martinez, author of the book and app, *Marine Life of the North Atlantic*, for his help identifying some of the critters on this particular dive. In particular, the Sea Potato (Above right), Orange Sheath Tunicate (Above left), and Gold Star Tunicate are invasive species, as is the ubiquitous Compound Sea Squirt, otherwise known informally as Rock Vomit. The Sea Potato was not in his North Atlantic marine life book or app, but will be added in the next update, which I understand is forthcoming shortly. The Orange Sheath is pictured overgrowing a Club Tunicate, a colorful wart-like filter feeding tunicate, also



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invasive and endemic to the area. Apparently, the invasive species act like weeds or English Ivy to crowd out local native species. Think suffocation or collateral damage here, like half-slipper snails that pile up on top of other mollusks and starve them by filtering away most of the food before it can reach the host “platform” underneath them all. My erroneous conclusion was the invasive were devouring the obstacles blocking their path. Evidently, the invasive tunicates do not eat the local species who are in their way because they are filter feeders, as well. Yet another example of the life and death struggle in the underwater world.

After the dive, Bonnie and I packed up our gear and made a beeline for Darcy’s Pub, which had just reopened. Brittany (At right), one of our favorite waitresses, recognized me as one of the Neptunes from our thrice monthly after-meeting presence at the pub, and waited on us. She wondered where the rest of the guys were. I had to tell her we probably won’t be back in force until the governor allows groups larger than 10 to assemble. After a few brewskis and some grub, we headed our separate ways home. Grub and brew at Darcy’s Pub in Quincy is a great way to end a dive on a delightful Sunday morning. It doesn’t get any better than this!



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Longwrist Hermit Crab

Well, folks, as you can see, the dive action is heating up along with the water. Don't be left behind. Come join us, as we dive into it, explore the liquid planet this summer, and exaggerate the day's efforts afterwards. Until next time,

Safe Living and Safe Diving!

Rob

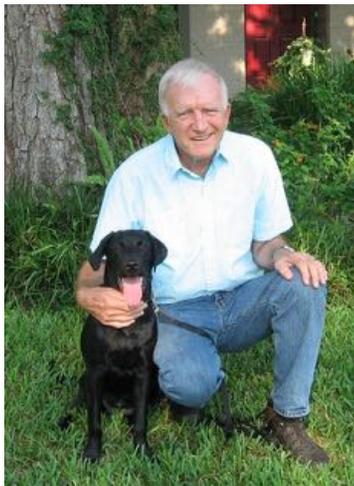
FROM THE ARCHIVES

Rescue at Sea Story, Story & photos from Dave Clancy

Over the years I've had many interesting diving adventures, but one incident back in 1981 particularly sticks in my mind. It's not exactly a diving story, but more a sea story. And luckily the people that were involved with me at the time documented the incident in an article in *Multihulls Magazine*, an old Quincy-based publication.

Back in the summer of 1981, a diver friend called one night and told me that a buddy of his named Larry, from Massachusetts, who had a self-built 50-foot trimaran (triple hulled sailboat) had just sailed the boat to Bermuda in a race, and that one of his crew members had to fly back home suddenly for an emergency. Larry was looking for a volunteer to fly to Bermuda and join the crew for the non-racing trip home to Buzzards Bay. My friend told me he couldn't go, but thought I might be interested. At the time I had been working hard and needed a break, so I immediately said, "Yes, I'd love to do it."

After a few quick calls, I made my plans and booked a flight, and two days later I flew to Bermuda and met with Captain Larry and the crew of his boat, the "Barbara Ann III." When I arrived, they were doing some minor repairs to the



Dave Clancy with Dixie circa 2012



Barbara Ann - Sealand - 1981

boat and preparing for the sailing trip home. I helped out with the chores a bit, then several of the other crew members and I went out to explore the British island, including of course, stops at a couple of pubs.

The next day we headed out of the harbor on our adventurous trip back home to Massachusetts. It was to be about an 800 mile trip across the Gulf Stream.

What happened next was that about halfway home our rudder broke off and floated away, and we were left stranded 400 miles at sea, with not many boats around, and our marine radio with its limited transmission range.

Although 1981 was before the days of satellite phones, luckily we had onboard an EPIRB (Emergency Position-Indicating Radio Beacon). So we turned on the EPIRB and hoped for a response. Several hours later, after nightfall, we heard someone on the radio calling the "vessel in distress," and the caller turned out to be the pilot of a US Coast Guard plane that had been sent out from New Jersey to investigate the signal. Capt. Larry explained our predicament to the pilot and told him that we were safe for the night, but that we would need help in the morning.

The next morning another Coast Guard plane came out and the pilot made arrangements with a Rotterdam-bound SeaLand freighter (an American-registered 600-foot-long ship) to divert from its course and come to our assistance. The freighter brought us tools and supplies for building a jury-rigged rudder. When the ship arrived, the transfer of tools and supplies to our boat went well. Once that was accomplished, the SeaLand captain asked if we needed anything else, and Larry told him, "No thanks." He said we could probably build the rudder ourselves, and that we would get back in touch with the Coast Guard if we needed anything else. At that point the SeaLand vessel departed and we were left on our own.

Next, our crew, including Larry who built the boat, and two crew members who were MIT-trained engineers, worked up a design plan for a jury-rigged rudder, and after a couple of false starts, we managed to build a rudder that worked perfectly. Two days later, we sailed into Buzzards Bay and arrived at Larry's yacht club in the middle of the night, where the whole club membership was there to welcome us with a nice party. A year later, our crew met up again to reminisce about our incredible good luck adventure, and I'm sure that these many years later, we all still think about it from time to time. We thank the US Coast Guard and SeaLand for their generous and very professional help.

Soon after the incident, Captain Larry submitted an article on our adventure to *Multihulls Magazine* and it was published a few months later.

Attached to the email containing this newsletter is the PDF link to the article Dave mentioned.

PARTING SHOT

Rockweed Centerpiece



PARTING THOUGHT

In Memoriam

The South Shore Neptunes extend deepest sympathies to the family of Neptune Ernie LeBlanc, who recently passed away, June 26, 2020. Neptune Dave Clancy shared the following story and photos:



Ernie LeBlanc circa 1998

Over the years Ernie was involved in many volunteer and social organizations, and was very dedicated to his family. I first met Ernie back in 1974 or so when we took an advanced Scuba course together. Following that course I introduced him to the Neptunes and he became a member. I was never really close with Ernie, but we did club and recovery dives together from time to time. And Ernie and his wife Marie visited my wife Myra and me once when we lived in Fort Lauderdale.



Ernie LeBlanc circa 1978

Ernie's son, Chris, sent the Club the following message:
*My Dad loved to scuba dive. He has missed it dearly for years. He always loved talking about his friends in the South Shore Neptunes and all the activities your group did. Thank you so much for the many years of camaraderie with our dad. We will miss him dearly as I know you will too. While we would love to have a large service for him so that all his friends could pay their respects, due to the Covid crisis, we are having a small private funeral at the National Cemetery in Bourne.
Take care,
Chris LeBlanc*

Here is a link to Ernie's obituary: <<https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/bourne-ma/ernest-leblanc-9238309>>

CLUB INFORMATION

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